



United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

# Site Update

## San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site

Harris County, Texas

January 2014

### This fact sheet will tell you about:

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- **Environmental and Public Health concerns**
- **Community Awareness**
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### Current site activities

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in cooperation with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Harris County, Port of Houston Authority and federal, state and local officials, are finalizing the Remedial Investigation / Feasibility Study (RI/FS) which will be completed in early 2014 to determine the best options to address site cleanup. This information will be shared with the community as it becomes available. EPA, working with site responsible parties, will also continue to closely monitor the site source stabilization cap placed over contained contaminants in 2011.

EPA is also carefully reviewing results from testing and characterization of a Southern Impoundment area located directly south of the current site and the I-10 Bridge.

In late 2014, EPA in coordination with site partner agencies will release the Proposed Plan for the site and will seek public input through appropriate venues.

After receiving public input on the agencies' Proposed Plan for cleanup, EPA in cooperation with partner agencies and the responsible parties will finalize the remedial plan for site cleanup. EPA will keep the public up updated during this process.

In regard to the site's Time Critical Removal Action (TCRA) cap, additional rock is being added for construction enhancements. The enhancement of the cap will be completed in late February dependent upon weather conditions and tides.

The waste pits are located near the west bank of the San Jacinto River, north of the I-10 Bridge.

The site's Project Managers will continue to further define site contamination, though the site has now been stabilized, and to develop a long term cleanup plan.

The RI/FS is expected to be completed in early 2014.

### Environmental and Public Health concerns:

Bilingual Fish Consumption Advisories are in place for the nearby San Jacinto River; persons should limit fish consumption to no more than one 8-ounce meal per month, and children under 12 and pregnant women should not eat any species of fish. Safety and health warning signs have been posted extensively throughout the area. Risk assessment for the area will continue to be updated.

The EPA's 2011 time critical removal action included the design and construction of a physical protective barrier surrounding waste Ponds 1 and 2 that address the release or threat of release of dibenzo-p-dioxins and polychlorinated dibenzofurans into the San Jacinto River. In addition to the construction of a physical barrier to keep the waste secure, public access restrictions were put into place. The restrictions involve placement of security fences and signs to prevent trespassing onto the property. The security fencing will prevent access of unauthorized persons into the entire area containing the waste impoundments. Additional sediment and surface water samples were taken for the design and construction of the protective barrier. The barrier is structurally sufficient to withstand forces sustained by the river, or severe weather events including any future erosion and is structurally sound until a final remedy is designed and implemented.

### Community Awareness

To assure public awareness of the site's significance, a wide range of no-trespassing and cautionary signs regarding contact with the site and consumption of seafood have been posted around the perimeter of the site in multiple languages. Fencing and barbed wire along more than 3,000 feet of shoreline were also installed in 2010 to prevent public access.

### What happens next?

EPA, in cooperation with TCEQ and other Harris County partner agencies, will continue to finalize the draft RI/FS for the site. The RI/FS frames the longer term clean-up plan for the site. The impacted communities will have opportunities to provide input to the RI/FS. This action will lead to a Proposed Plan for cleanup being developed which will be shared with the community. EPA, TCEQ and Harris County have held multiple community engagement meetings and will continue to collaborate on the RI/FS and the best possible practices to inform and involve site visitors, residents, local, state and federal partners on site health concerns and future site-related activities.

## Site background

The San Jacinto River Waste Pits site is on the western bank of the San Jacinto River, in Harris County, Texas, immediately north and south of the Interstate Highway 10 (I-10) bridge over the San Jacinto River and is located east of the City of Houston between two unincorporated areas known as Channelview and Highlands. The site was constructed in the 1960s for disposal of pulp and paper mill waste. The site's waste pits consist of two impoundments north of I-10, and the Southern Impoundment located south of I-10.

The two ponds containing hazardous substances were partially submerged in the San Jacinto River, as well as locations where the hazardous substances may have been deposited, placed or otherwise come to be located. Including the Southern Impoundment, all of the impoundments are currently under investigation.

The site was placed on the National Priorities List (NPL) on March 19, 2008. The NPL is the EPA's list of uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites identified for long term cleanup under the federal Superfund program.

## Community Engagement

In 2012, EPA awarded a Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) to the Galveston Bay Foundation. Galveston Bay is the lead agency to interpret site information and data for the community with the assistance of a Technical Advisor.

The San Jacinto Community Awareness Committee (CAC), comprised of EPA, state and Harris County agencies, also meets frequently to review and respond to site community engagement and public issues impacted by the site.

## For more information

### U.S. EPA

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**Site Repository**  
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**Highlands, Texas**

**All inquiries from the news media should be directed to the Region 6 Press Office at 214.665.2200.**

**San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site on the internet:**

<http://www.epa.gov/region6/6sf/pdf/files/san-jacinto-tx.pdf>

[http://www.epa.gov/region6/6sf/texas/san\\_jacinto/](http://www.epa.gov/region6/6sf/texas/san_jacinto/)

[https://www.epaos.org/site/site\\_profile.aspx?site\\_id=6534](https://www.epaos.org/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=6534)

To receive a Spanish translation of this fact sheet call U.S. EPA at 1.800.533.3508 (toll-free).

Para recibir una traducción en español de esta hoja de datos, comuníquese con la Agencia de Protección del Medio Ambiente de los EE.UU. (la EPA) al número de teléfono 1.800.533.3508 (llamada gratis).